



8(a) Contractor's Corner

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MONTANA DISTRICT OFFICE FY 2002 8(a) CONTRACTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Montana District Office (MDO) 8(a) division, had a record year with more than 80 contracts totaling over \$242.6 million.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) cordially thanks all the Procurement Agencies that support the 8(a) program and sends its congratulations to the 8(a) firms.

From the Desk of Mary Brilakis

S&K TECHNOLOGIES NAMED MINORITY FIRM OF THE YEAR

S&K Technologies, Inc., a Tribal entity of the Confederated Tribes of Salish and Kootenai on the Flathead Indian Reservation, was recently selected as the Minority Firm of the Year. Greg DuMontier is the Chief Executive Officer and is one of the principal reasons the company has seen sales increase by 3600 percent. Congratulations to Greg and his staff at S&K Technologies!

*Written by Robert Much
Business Opportunity Specialist*

NEW FIRMS

The MED 8(a) contracting division recently acquired 3 new firms.

***A & S Diversified** - Industrial Manufacturer – Poplar, MT

***Menth Excavating, Inc.** - Excavation Contractor – East Helena, MT

***Explosive Technologies & Services Corporation** – Environmental Consulting - Whitefish, MT.

2002 8(a) GRADUATES

Scott Long Construction and L.A. Olson & Associates successfully completed and graduated from the 8(a) program.

Congratulations Scott and Larry!

From the Desk of Mary Brilakis



OFFICE NEWS:

The Montana District Office of the SBA had a Quality Service Review (QSR) the week of September 9th. SBA personnel from around the country reviewed all divisions of the Montana District Office (MDO). We are very happy to report that we received an excellent review and only a few minor problems were detected. The team went away with many “Best Practices”. The review team was very complimentary of the MDO staff. SBA district offices are reviewed approximately every five years. I have had the opportunity to serve on several QSR’s reviewing SBA offices and have found it to be a very good learning experience.

Please watch for information on Small Business Week Award Nominations for 2003.

Written by Michelle Johnston, District Director

BONDING FOR YOUR FIRM

Construction and service industry firms that want to grow and give themselves a competitive advantage may need to consider obtaining a surety bond in certain situations. The proven ability to obtain a surety bond is a tool which aids such small businesses in being competitive. The SBA Surety Bond Guarantee Program can assist small businesses in gaining this competitive advantage. Specifically, the bond is an agreement between the small business, the project owner and the surety company. There are generally three types of such bonds or agreements in the SBA Surety Bond Guarantee Program.

The first type or situation is known as a bid bond. This bond guarantees that the small business that bids on a contract will enter into the contract and give the project owner the payment and performance bonds that the owner may require. The second type of bond is a payment bond. This one guarantees payment from the small business to other parties to the contract that furnish labor, materials, equipment or supplies in performing the contract. The third type of bond is a performance bond. This guarantees that the small business will perform the contract according to the contract terms. If the small business is not able to perform in the bid, payment or performance areas of the contract process the surety company will take over the process and complete it.

SBA takes part in the process by reimbursing the surety company, through its guarantee, for payments made by the bonding company for completing the process and losses occurring as a result of the small businesses failure to perform. The SBA’s guarantee agreement is with the surety company and not the small business. The surety company issues the

bond to the small business contractor once all the eligibility concerns are satisfied.

All small businesses may participate in the surety bond program. Certain eligibility conditions will apply. The first step is to find an agent that handles such bonding. For more information, contact SBA Surety Bond Specialist Darryl Bellamy in Denver at 303/844-5231, extension 261. Bonding may be approved through the Prior Approval program or the Preferred Surety Bond (PSB) program. In the Prior Approval program the surety company reviews an application package and if it is approved it is forwarded to SBA for its approval. SBA will guarantee up to 90% of the loss on bonds up to \$100,000.00 for socially and economically disadvantaged small businesses and for qualified HUBZone firms and 80% of losses on all other bonds in the program. The PSB program has a 70% guarantee for surety companies on losses and prior SBA approval is not required. Only selected sureties have authority to issue bonds under the PSB program. All bonds are issued only on eligible contracts.

The small business should apply for a specific bond with an agent or surety company of their choice. Specific information including financial, credit and background will be required by the company and SBA. The bonding company will evaluate the credit, capacity and character of the small business. SBA will also do an eligibility determination and require certain forms be completed. The necessary forms can be obtained from the Montana District Office. Bonds on contracts of \$2 million or less are available. Fees are charged to both the small business and the surety company. The amount of the fee is described in the most recent edition of the Code of Federal Regulations. The business does not have to be in the 8(a) or the Certified Small Disadvantage Business program to obtain a bond. The goal of the SBA surety bond program is to aid small businesses in the construction and service industries to grow and compete and finally to help them become bondable without SBA assistance. If you are interested in the surety bond program, please give Darryl Bellamy a call.

Submitted by Michael J. Bayuk, District Counsel

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

Find it, or give it away, buy it, sell it, or trade it on the Montana Materials Exchange! Just logon to www.montana.edu/mme and place a "wanted" or "available" listing. Whether its pallets, packing peanuts, chemicals, construction materials, or something else entirely, the Montana Material Exchange (MME) is a cost-saving alternative to disposing of surplus, used or leftover items. It's also an excellent way to find materials that you need. Maintained by the Montana State University Extension Service Pollution Prevention Program in partnership with the Montana Chamber of Commerce, this free service connect businesses, government agencies and other organizations that have materials they need to get rid of, with parties who can use them. Users can also designate "available" materials as free to schools, charities, or government agencies.

So, before you pay to dispose of those old desks, leftover construction materials, or surplus cleaning chemicals, remember that someone else might be happy to take them.

From the Desk of Mary Brilakis

NEW GOVERNMENT VENDOR DIRECTORY

Fedmarket.com offers a vendor database which includes a National Stock Number Search (NSN) search capability. The service allows government buyers to search a comprehensive database of over 450,000 government vendors. Buyers may search by:

National Stock Number (NSN)
Keywords (s) describing products/services
NAICS code
DUNS number
Company name
State

Federal, state, and local buyers can use the vendor database for market research, locating specific vendors for products or services being purchased and finding contact and address information for known companies.

More information on this service is located at:

<http://www.fedmarket.com/productTour/vendorDatabase/gvd.php>.

Talking to Other Buyers

Fedmarket.com. FedBuying Intelligence subscription service can lead you to buyers at the federal level. This service analyzes historical FedBizOpps solicitation and awards data by agency and individual buyer. The service provides information such as what the buyer bought, when they bought it, from whom and how much they paid. More information can be found at: <http://fbi.bidengine.com/>.

From the Desk of Mary Brilakis

RESOURCES TO GET YOUR BUSINESS ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Besides inadequate access to capital, perhaps the single most important obstacle to small business success is the lack of technical and management assistance, and access to timely and accurate information, training, counseling and business education. That's why providing small business development assistance is one of the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA's) primary goals. To accomplish this, the SBA has a network of resource partners and assistance centers throughout the country, within easy reach of most of the nation's entrepreneurs, and for the most part, their services are FREE!

Among these resource partners are Small Business Development Centers (SBDC's), the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), Women's Business Centers (WBC) and Business Information Centers (BICS), as well as a variety of

online advisory and training services that can be found through the SBA's Web site at www.sba.gov.

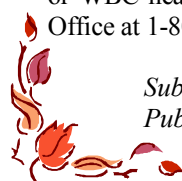
The SBDC network is recognized as one of the finest business outreach programs of its kind in the nation. The SBDC program is designed to provide management assistance to current and prospective small business owners. General business education, such as management development, technical information and marketing assistance form the bulk of SBDC services. The program delivers up-to-date counseling, training and technical assistance in all aspects of small business management. SBDC services include, but are not limited to, assisting small businesses with financial, marketing, production, organization, engineering and technical problems and feasibility studies. Special SBDC programs and economic development activities include international trade assistance, technical assistance, procurement assistance, venture capital formation and rural development. These business education services are offered via one-on-one counseling as well as regularly scheduled training seminars. SBDCs are located in Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Colstrip, Great Falls, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, Missoula and Wolf Point.

BICs provide one-stop shopping for the latest in business trends and information. BICs provide the latest in high-technology hardware, software, and telecommunications to assist small businesses. BICs use state-of-the-art personal computers, graphic work stations, CD-ROM technology, and interactive videos that allow the small business entrepreneur access to market research databases, use of planning and spreadsheet software, and use of vast libraries of information to help them start or build their businesses. BICs also offer one-on-one counseling. BICs are located in Billings, Bozeman, Helena and on each of the seven Indian Reservations.

SCORE is another resource partner of the SBA and is often referred to as the "Counselors to America's Small Businesses." SCORE members are successful, business professionals. The men and women of SCORE have owned, operated and/or managed businesses and donate their time and expertise as volunteer business counselors by providing confidential counseling and mentoring free of charge. SCORE's experienced business experts provide general business advice on everything from how to write a business plan, to cash flow management, to developing a small business advisory board. Assistance for aspiring entrepreneurs may involve investigating the market potential for a product or service and assessing the capital needs to start a business. Counselors can provide insight into how to start a business, operate a business, buy a business, or franchise and sell a business. SCORE has eight offices in Montana located in Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Havre, Helena, Kalispell and Missoula. Visit SCORE at www.score.org WBCs provide technical assistance and training to women interested in starting or building a business. Assistance is provided in the areas of business planning, finance, management, marketing, procurement and the Internet, as well as specialized topics such as home-based businesses and welfare-to-work. WBCs provide individual business

counseling and access to the SBA's programs and services; a number are also intermediaries for the SBA's MicroLoan and Loan Prequalification programs. Each WBC tailors its programs to the needs of its constituency; many offer programs and counseling in two or more languages. Montana's lone WBC, the Business Resource Center, is located in Helena and serves clients in Lewis & Clark, Broadwater, Jefferson and Meagher counties. The WBC can be reached by calling (406) 443-0800.

Valuable resources designed to aid, assist and counsel small business entrepreneurs are also right at your fingertips. Literally, log onto SBA's comprehensive website at www.sba.gov and tap into an on-line counseling chat room or attend an online business plan course in SBA's virtual classroom. You can also view a list of SBA resource partners at www.sba.gov/mt to locate the SBDC, BIC, SCORE Chapter, or WBC nearest you or simply call the Montana SBA District Office at 1-800-776-9144 ext. 2.



*Submitted by: Rena Carlson
Public Affairs Specialist*

If you have a news item you would like to have published in a future newsletter, contact Mary Brilakis, publisher, at (406) 441-1081, or e-mail: mary.brilakis@sba.gov.

